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## *East-West Relations May Be Unaffected By Pope Plot Trial*

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An Italian judge has ordered what is likely to be a sensational trial next year that will test Bulgarian involvement in a plot to kill Pope John Paul II. But his decision may have surprisingly little impact on East-West relations.

Political fallout from the case is expected to be limited by several factors, including the reluctance of the Reagan administration to exploit the papal shooting for anti-Soviet propaganda; the death this year of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov, who headed the Soviet security service, the KGB, at the time of the papal shooting; and the complexity and murkiness of the case itself.

The Reagan administration, eager to improve relations with the Soviets, has avoided blaming Moscow for the crime, even though many intelligence experts believe that if the Bulgarians were involved, the Soviets must have known about it. Instead, the Reagan administration is continuing its low-key response, with officials emphasizing that the investigation is an Italian matter and that the U.S. won't comment until after the trial.

The case might have been more explosive if Mr. Andropov were still running the Kremlin. But his death last February removed one possible culprit from the case and, in the view of some U.S. officials, reduced its emotional impact.

The complexity of the case is also numbing. There are eight different defendants, two alleged gunmen, 25,000 pages of evidence and a maze of competing theories about how and why Bulgarian intelligence officers would have selected a gunman linked with Turkish drug smugglers to kill the Polish pope.

After a three-year investigation, the Italian judge, Ilario Martella, indicted Lt. Col. Zhelio Vasilev and Todor Aivazov, former officials at the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome who have returned to Sofia, and Sergei Antonov, a Bulgarian state airline official held by Italian authorities since November 25, 1982.

Charging them and five Turks of complicity in the shooting on May 13, 1981, Mr. Martella said, "We must believe without question that there was an international plot to kill the pope."

The judge declined to speculate on the political motivation or inspiration for the plot. But state prosecutor Antonio Albano, who gave important assistance to Judge Martella, had charged that the plot was aimed at eliminating a pope who had helped fire the rise of the Solidarity union movement in Poland.